



BUGLE CALLS, NOVEMBER 2018

SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE

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1. Nov. 8th MEETING

DENNY'S RESTAURANT, 710 W. SHAW AVE., CLOVIS

6:00 PM DINNER & SOCIAL HOUR

7:00 MEETING

7:15 PROGRAM: Dennis Kohlman presents on Civil War Cavalry

Afterwards, the usual book raffle.

2. UPCOMING EVENTS:

NOV. 8th Same night as our meeting Ken Moats will receive an award for his service at Hope Lutheran Church.

NOV. 9th-11th WEST COAST CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE

Fri. Registration 4:00 pm, Dinner 5:45, Speakers 7 to 9.

Sat. Speakers begin 8 am., Dinner 4:45 followed by Speakers.

Sun. 8:30 am to 12:00

DEC. 13TH CHRISTMAS PARTY

At Denny's (unless someone volunteers to host it elsewhere)

3. PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello All,

Happy Halloween to everybody. Dennis Kohlman will be speaking about Birth of Cavalry at our next meeting on 11/8, I'm also looking forward to seeing everyone at the conference.

Michael Spencer

4. AFTER ACTION REPORT (Oct. Meeting & Kearny Park CW), BY RON VAUGHAN

A. OCT. 11TH MEETING:

We had 10 persons at the meeting. Michael Spencer shared a letter he drafted regarding preserving land on the site of Letter Field Hospital, at Gettysburg. It was to be sent on our behalf to the Trust show our support for this cause.

I had shocking news that the Wyndham Hotel is sold out for the weekend of our conference. Unfortunately, most are not our participants, so late registrations will have to stay at the Piccadilly Inn. So far we have only 40 signed up, plus our five speakers. Mike Green suggested we treat our speakers, who arrive early, and have to stay over Sunday, to a dinner.

Gail reported we have \$8,248 in the bank account.

I presented a Power Point program on Robert Smalls. I think it is an amazing story. He was born a slave in a small house behind his master's house in Beaufort S.C. Since he was getting into trouble on the plantation, his mother persuaded the owner to send him to Charleston,

where he could be rented out to work. His owner kept the earning, except for 1 dollar a week that Robert could keep. Robert worked on the harbor boats and became very knowledgeable about navigating the harbor. Eventually he became the pilot, of the coastal cotton trade steam boat "Planter," under Captain C.J. Relya.

Robert married a slave woman, and wanted to buy her and their two children, but the owner demanded \$800 and Robert only had saved up \$100. He had to think of another way.

When the Civil War broke out, Charleston was blockaded by the Union Navy. The Planter was armed with two large guns and four smaller cannon. On the night of May 12th, 1862, Relya and the other two white officers went ashore to visit their families. The Black crew were left on the ship, since Relya trusts them. However, Robert has a plan: they get up steam, pull out from the dock, and he dons the Captain's hat—strutting on the deck like Captain Relya. They stop at a dock and pick up the wives and children of Robert and some of the other men.

Robert knows the proper signals to flash, to fool the sentries in the harbor forts. Only after the "Planter" coolly sailed past Fort Sumter, was the alarm raised.

After the danger from Confederate guns past, the next hazard to avoid being fired upon by the Union Navy. Quickly, the Confederate flags were lowered, and a white bed sheet was raised. Fortunately, just as the gun ports were opened on the USS Onward, and it was about to fire, Lt. Nichols spies the white flag in the pre-dawn light. Admiral Du Pont was impressed by Robert's intelligence and audacity.

He saw to it that the escaped slaves were taken care of, and the Navy awarded Robert Smalls prize money for capturing the "Planter": \$1,500, and \$3,000 to split among

the crew. He became a hero in the North, and personally recruited some 5,000 Blacks for the Union Army and Navy. Then he returned to the "Planter" as its pilot, and eventually took command when the Captain lost his courage under fire. He was paid a salary of \$150 a month, the highest paid Black in the service.

In the post war South, his former master, Mr. Mckee, had lost everything, so Robert bought Mckee's house. When Mckee died, Robert let the elderly and ill Mrs. Mckee move into her old bedroom, and live there until she died. Robert invested in businesses, and a railroad. He was appointed a General of the State Militia, and was elected four 5 terms to the U.S. Congress, until 1895, when Reconstruction was rolled back, and Blacks lost their voting rights. Robert continued to be an unyielding advocate for the political rights of African Americans.

Smalls died on February 22, 1915, in the same house behind which he had been born a slave. In 2004, the U.S. Navy named a ship to honor him, the "Major General Robert Smalls." This was the first ship to be named after an African American.

Robert Smalls tombstone reads: "My race needs no special defense for the past history of them and this country. It proves them to be equal of any people anywhere. All they need is an equal chance in the battle of life."

B. KEARNY PARK CIVIL WAR RE-ENACTMENT Oct. 20 & 21

Once again, I fell in with the 69th New York "Irish Brigade," under the command of Captain Mike Gately. Johnathan Schulze was there also, and Dave Davenport joined us on Sunday. Dr. Brian Clague was in the "Medical Tent" giving lectures with help from Patti

Spencer. Wayne Scott and Kay were also present during the day, with Wayne playing the roll of a General sent to observe matters and “report back to President Lincoln.” Steve Ganner was present as Jeff Davis, and his wife Diane portrayed Mrs. R.E. Lee.

The weather was perfect for the event, although even at a high of only 85 degrees, the wool uniforms produced plenty of sweat. It was strange that there were no ads in the newspaper, nor the usual after action photos. Nevertheless, there seemed to be large crowds of spectators.

5. CIVIL WAR HUMOR FROM “THE BLUE & GRAY LAUGHING”

One of the provost guards brought a man into the office charged with stealing watermelons. The charge was proved, and I sentenced him to ten days in the provost guardhouse. As he was being led away, I said to him. “I hope, Tom, I shall never see you here again.”

He turned to me with a peculiarly shrewd expression and said, “You wouldn’t have seen me this time, Cap’n, if the soldiers hadn’t caught me.”

6. PRESERVATION NEWS

American Battle Trust announced that an additional 276 acres has been preserved at Appomattox Court House Historical Park. The ground includes six tracts of battlefield land where the Union V Corps fought verses Mahone’s and Gordan’s Divisions and other Confederates on April 9, 1865.